

Evidence-Based Interventions

Community-based organizations received funding through the MDHC to conduct evidence-based interventions in the Mississippi Delta. Each funded program is required to focus on strategies and activities that will lead to policy and environmental systems change to support easy and accessible healthy behaviors.

FY 2010 Grantees:

1. Delta Health Alliance - Church Garden Project

The Church Garden Project will support the development of congregational gardens to encourage increased access to and consumption of fruits and vegetables and to assist congregational members to become physically active. The community garden will provide fresh healthy produce, as well as opportunities for building community activity. It will serve to complement the strategies of several Delta Health Alliance (DHA) projects, tied either directly or indirectly to area African-American churches, seeking to address chronic disease risk factors in the Mississippi Delta.

Intervention Counties: Bolivar, Sunflower, and Washington Counties

Policy/Environmental System Change Strategy:

African-American congregations in Washington, Sunflower, and Bolivar counties will institute a church garden program within their respective churches. The church garden program will increase access to affordable fruits and vegetables among congregants and community members, thereby supporting healthy behaviors.

2. Abundant Living Community Organization Congregational Nurses at Work

Faith-based and community-based organizations will join forces to tackle cardiovascular disease in the African-American community through the Congregational Nurses at Work (CNAW) program. The goal of this project is to reduce cardiovascular disease (CVD) morbidity and mortality in the Mississippi Delta through the presentation of culturally specific education and referral programs for African Americans. The project will be implemented in twelve churches located in Bolivar, Coahoma, Leflore, Sunflower, and Washington Counties. The model will begin with the identification and training of a registered nurse, chosen by the pastor or senior church leader of each participating church. Each nurse will participate in the certified Congregational Parish Nurse Health Ministry Training. Prevention programs will be developed implemented and evaluated within each church. With goals focused on outreach and service coordination, this project is unique in that it is a culturally tailored program designed to address common needs, concerns, and challenges relative to African Americans in the target population.

Intervention Counties: Bolivar, Coahoma, Leflore, Sunflower, and Washington

Policy/Environmental System Change Strategy:

Churches within the African American community will institute Health and Wellness Ministries in their congregation, which includes the certification of a registered nurse as a Congregational Health Nurse. The Congregational Nurse at Work program will aid in promotion of healthy behavior which include physical activity and nutritional eating.

3. Jonestown Family Center for Education and Wellness - Building a Healthy Jonestown, One Family at a Time

The "Building a Healthy Jonestown, One family at a Time" project seeks to increase the physical activity and health literacy of children, adolescents and adults in the Jonestown, Mississippi area. The overall concept focuses on two distinct components which are proposed as "Get Smart, Jonestown" and "Get Moving, Jonestown". The program includes individual fitness assessments (BMI, cardio-respiratory fitness, muscular strength and endurance and flexibility) which will allow prescriptive plans to be developed for baseline activity which can be increased over time. The same

assessments will be conducted as a "post-test" for program participants to measure benefits of their increased activities. Programs will include aerobic, muscle-strengthening and bone-strengthening activities that are appropriate and enjoyable for children, adolescents and adults. A community-based walking group program will be organized and developed according to the specific action steps outlined in the CDC publication *Social Support for Physical Activity: Establishing a Community-Based Walking Group Program to Increase Physical Activity among Youth and Adults-An Action Guide*.

Intervention County: Coahoma

Policy/Environmental System Change Strategy:

Increase community access to physical activity through a joint use agreement with the Coahoma County School District for use of the school gymnasium.

4. Aaron E. Henry Community Health Services Center, Inc. - Reducing the Burden of Cardiovascular Disease Collaborative

The project intends to improve the quality of care, decrease complications and spread improvements throughout the organization for persons with chronic diseases living in Coahoma County. AEH 's annual report identified the patient population of 16,568; the majority of patients served are African American (14,852 or 91 percent). Approximately, 6,453 patients have no health insurance and the proposed program is specifically designed to address health disparities in this vulnerable population, which AEH serves as part of its mandate as a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC). Two of the most significant chronic illnesses within the population are diabetes and hypertension. In 2007, there were 842 persons with diabetes and 2,040 patients with hypertension seen at AEH clinic sites. All diabetic and hypertensive patients (mostly uninsured and Medicaid) receiving care at AEH are eligible to participate in the program for comprehensive care management services. AEH will enroll at least 50 percent of the eligible population (420 individuals with diabetes and 1,020 with hypertension) in this program for 12 month project period. The goal of the project is to improve the health status of high risk patients with diabetics and hypertension by enrolling each patient in a track system to monitor their HbA1c level and blood pressure.

Intervention County: Coahoma County

Policy/Environmental System Change Strategy:

Establishment of a comprehensive disease management protocol for patients with diabetes and hypertension.

- Reducing the Burden of Cardiovascular Disease Collaborative project increases healthcare quality because program participants are knowledgeable and equipped to provide the appropriate care for themselves and assist others through information provided in the patient-centered care management system with self-management support.
- Employers will be able to provide workers with lower healthcare costs due to the reduction of hypertension and diabetes.

5. Delta Citizens Alliance - Creating a Competitive Advantage with Healthier Workers

DCA proposes to implement a program designed to increase the commitment and capacity of local employers to encourage and support their employees to become healthier through worksite wellness programs. The program intends to organize a county-wide Employee Health and Wellness Council in each of the five targeted counties. The council will include private employers, local Delta council and Economic Development, union representatives, school district administrators, leaders from faith-based organizations, and health care providers.

Intervention Counties: Washington, Sunflower, Bolivar, Coahoma, and Leflore Counties

Policy/Environmental System Change Strategy:

- Non-smoking policies will be implemented at worksite establishments, eliminating the use of all tobacco products and reducing exposure to second hand smoke.
- Physical activity options will be provided to employees to support increased daily levels of physical activity on the worksites and employees can monitor individual weight and reduce higher Body Mass Index rates.
- Healthy and nutritious food and drink options will be implemented at worksite establishments which will assist employees in improving their diets by reducing fats and increasing fruits and vegetable consumption.
- Worksite wellness will increase utilization of recommended preventive health testing and services.

6. Four Aces Racquet Club - Youth Tennis as a Vehicle to a Healthy Lifestyle

The Four Aces Racquet Club will implement a summer youth tennis program which will consist of rigorous physical fitness activities and educational programs geared toward exposing young people to healthy lifestyles. The program will target youth between the ages of 8 and 16 who will be recruited through the Greenville Public School System and the Boys and Girls Club of Washington County. Other collaborative partners will include the Greenville Parks and Recreation, Delta Regional Medical Center, and Washington County Drug Task Force.

Intervention County: Washington

Policy/Environmental System Change Strategy:

Joint agreements established with the city of Greenville, Parks and Recreation Department, and School Districts, and Boys and Girls Club provides access to facilities for physical activity.

7. University of Mississippi Eating Good and Moving Like We Should

The University of Mississippi Department of Family and Consumer Sciences will partner with the Bolivar County School System to implement a nutrition education program within the school and community setting. Nutrition consultants will instruct school personnel how to deliver appropriate meals that meet dietary guidelines. Consultants will serve on the parent-teacher teams to support activities to reduce chronic disease risk factors. Teachers will receive training on how to integrate the program into the existing school curriculum. Students will have access to nutrition education that will focus on health outcomes, weight management, diabetes, and related indicators such as blood pressure, body mass index, and blood glucose control.

Intervention County: Bolivar

Policy/Environmental System Change Strategy:

- School districts will implement healthier food choices within vending machines and cafeterias.
- Nutrition education will be integrated into the existing classroom curriculum.
- Schools will transform defunct physical education programs to a rigorous curriculum that teaches and emphasizes the importance of physical activity.

8. Southern Aids Commission Mississippi Delta Health Improvement Initiative

The overall goals of the Southern Aids Commission are to work within the frame of social environment which will help address chronic conditions and their related risk factors and within the frame of policy, facilitating the development of new policies to promote healthy lifestyles. SAC will provide capacity building assistance to African-American community leaders and community members in Washington and Sunflower Counties through the establishment of coalitions. These coalitions will work to develop community action plans which focus on reducing risk factors for heart disease and stroke prevention at the policy level.

Intervention Counties: Washington and Sunflower Counties

Policy/Environmental System Change Strategy:

Engage and build capacity within communities to foster policy and environmental system change that supports healthy behaviors and improves health outcomes.

- Building of coalitions within the communities by focusing on leading issues within the MS Delta centered on chronic disease prevention.
- The utilization of community inputs from forums to build coalitions that will recruit members, identify short-term initiatives in each county, and develop strategic plans for long-term environmental change.

Community Health Councils

The Mississippi Delta Health Collaborative will facilitate the establishment of Health Councils in cities and towns within target counties. The councils will:

- Be responsible ensuring health is a consideration in all sectors of the community, including Government, School, Worksites, Church, Community, and Economic Development.
- Have broad representation from the community.
- Promote and implement Policies and Practices to Support a Culture of Wellness.

Milestones for Community Health Council Development

Step One: Regional Stakeholder Meeting

On July 9, 2009, a Community Action Lab was held in Stoneville, MS. The purpose of the meeting was to engage community stakeholders in a discussion on how local conditions, such as access to healthy food options; access to safe physical activity options; primary health care; sources of stress such as poverty, crime, and discrimination; policies regarding tobacco and air pollution, have an adverse impact on the health.

Step Two: Health Forum

The MDHC is partnering with local Mayors to hold Health Forums to discuss how and what local conditions have an adverse impact on health.

- Facilitated by MDHC Staff
- Utilize Unnatural Causes Series and Discussion Guide
- Begin September 2009
- Supported by and planned in coordination with each Mayor's Office

Step Three: Health Council Formation

A Health Council will be formed in each town with broad representation from the community including public and private entities working together to create the conditions that make it possible for all individuals to achieve their health potential.

Step Four: Assess Community Strengths and Weaknesses

Utilizing qualitative and quantitative data and statistics, an assessment of the community's strengths and weaknesses with respect the local public health system.

Step Five: Develop Strategies to Address Weaknesses and Leverage Strengths

An action plan will be developed to address weaknesses while leveraging community strengths and assets to improve local conditions that adversely impact health outcomes.

Step Six: Implementation and Evaluation

Successful interventions, based on pre-defined measures and outcomes will serve as a model to be replicated in neighboring cities and counties.